



About the History of Idaho's Capitol

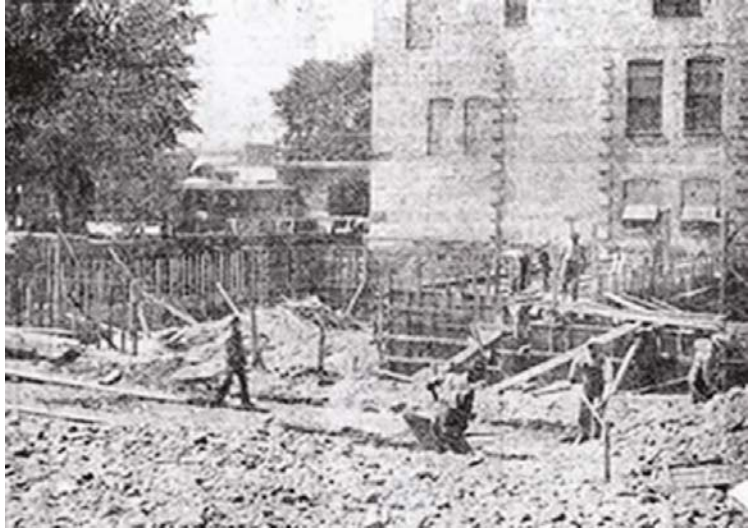
A Beacon for Noble Ideals

Following the completion on the first phase of construction, electric lights illuminated the exterior of the central portion and accented the building's defining elements.

In designing the Idaho State Capitol, Tourtellotte was highly sensitive to the use of color, even if in application his inclinations tended toward the very subtle. The melding of the exterior sandstone with the coloration of the surrounding landscape imparts a sense of integration. Although Tourtellotte very consciously borrowed from the collective architectural culture, he repackaged forms for the State of Idaho in a manner that is highly personal and appropriate. In the interiors, Tourtellotte intentionally utilized reflective surfaces of white marble and glossy white enamel paint to create spaces that effectively function as reflectors of light. In using natural light as a decorative element in the building, Tourtellotte attempts to evoke that which is pure and universal, although ephemeral in its daily and seasonal transience. Tourtellotte's design sought ways in which to harness sunlight, utilizing light shafts and skylights to channel natural illumination to even the most interior Capitol spaces. As a result, Tourtellotte has been successful in achieving a luminous interior space, which, as he conveyed in his statement *Capitol of Idaho*, he believed embodies the soul of the commonwealth. For Tourtellotte, light is a metaphor for an enlightened state government that taps its land and populace to establish integrity. In addition, Tourtellotte was committed to designing a building that would incorporate advanced materials and technologies to create an environment that both reflected a civilized state and facilitated the ease and comfort of those working in the building. In the design of the Idaho State Capitol, Tourtellotte's Beaux-Arts tendencies come to fruition as he blends his deep respect for traditional architectural form with a commitment to technology and, more importantly, a commitment to expressing the highest and most noble aspirations of the population of Idaho.



Looking towards the central oculus at the top of the inner dome, concentric rings of windows and electric lights illuminate the rotunda.



During the autumn of 1919, The Idaho Daily Statesman reported on the progress of the excavation of the new wings. Trenches and forms for setting the foundation of the east wing are pictured in this photo.